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RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 6685  
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RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 4939

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000881

NOFORN  
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DEPARTMENT FOR P, NEA, EAP, EAP/ANP  
NEA FOR A/S FELTMAN AND PDAS SCHLICHER  
NSC FOR BADER, LOI AND TALWAR  
NEA/IR FOR MICHAEL G. SPRING  
CA/OCS FOR BRIANNE MARWAHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2019

TAGS: PREL PINR CASC IR AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA REPORTS MOHAMMED LARIJANI OPTIMISTIC  
HIKER RELEASE

REF: A. A. STATE 94757  
¶B. B. CANBERRA 840

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard D. Kagan. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: Mohammed Javad Larijani, Secretary General of Iran's Supreme Council of Human Rights and the Head of the Office of International Affairs of the Judiciary, told Australian Ambassador to Iran Marc Innes-Brown September 16 that he was optimistic that the three American hikers held in Iran would "soon be cleared of any spying charges and that within 7-10 days their situations would be more concrete." End Summary.

¶2. (C/NF) Jenny Bloomfield, Director of the Middle East Section at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade reported that on September 16, Mohammed Javad Larijani, brother of Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, met with the Australian ambassador and discussed the status, among other matters, of the three American hikers being held in Iran without charges because they strayed across the Iraq border into Iran. Larijani told him that the Swiss ambassador raises the issue with the Iranian MFA almost daily.

¶3. (C/NF) Commenting that the three had crossed the border "illegally," Larijani noted that, many Iraqis cross that particular section of the border unwittingly. He hoped that the security officials would soon complete their investigations and that there was every chance that the three would then be released. According to Bloomfield, Larijani mentioned that two of the three American hikers were journalists, despite Press reports suggesting that only one of the three, Shane Bauer, is a freelance journalist.

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